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Ministry of Education

ÉCOLE VICTOR BRODEUR OPENS WITH GREEN FOCUS

VICTORIA – Students and staff at the second-largest francophone school in B.C. are celebrating the school's new safe and environmentally advanced green design, Education Minister Shirley Bond said today at the school's official opening.

"Environmental conservation has greatly influenced the design of this replacement school," said Bond. "I commend école Victor Brodeur for doing its part to help us reach our goal of reducing B.C.'s greenhouse gas emissions by at least 33 per cent below current levels by 2020."

L'école Victor Brodeur elementary/secondary will have room for 540 students in kindergarten through Grade 12 and will be operated by the Conseil Scolaire Francophone (CSF), the B.C. school district that represents francophone students. The new Victor Brodeur replaces its namesake on the existing site.

"L'école Victor Brodeur will continue to offer early childhood programs for young children and out-of-school care, making it a place that will foster and nurture the development of the francophone community in our Province for years to come," said John van Dongen, Minister of State for Intergovernmental Relations.

The school conserves energy and water through the use of efficient lighting, high-performance windows and insulation, a heating system that recovers and recirculates heat, low-flush toilets and waterless urinals. The school property includes permeable asphalt, which will allow more rainwater to be treated and absorbed into the ground, with any excess water retained in a basin beneath the surface. Several mature trees on the property were preserved in the landscaping around the school.

"This state-of-the-art school provides a safe and eco-friendly learning environment for students and staff," said CSF chair Marie Bourgeois. "In light of Victor Brodeur's steady growth and the arrival of new French-language citizens in the Victoria area, the school will continue to play an important role in our school district, as well as in the francophone community."

The school was completed in January at a cost of $19 million, with the Province contributing $16 million towards the facility and the federal government contributing $3 million for an on-site preschool, before- and after-school care facilities, and a theatre. In order to improve the air quality indoors, contractors used natural wood products and flooring instead of chemical and plastic products wherever possible. They also recycled and reused more than 75 per cent of construction waste materials to keep them out of landfills.

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The school district has a partnership agreement with the municipality of Esquimalt to share the use of indoor and outdoor school spaces – like the theatre, gymnasium and kitchen area – and Esquimalt Parks and Recreation spaces, including the recreation centre, Archie Browning Arena and Bullen Park. Funding from the municipality also contributed to the construction of a basketball court and an outdoor multi-use field on the school grounds. The new school will also be earthquake safe.

Capital funding for francophone schools has totalled more than $47 million over the last four years, including funding for école Victor Brodeur, Vancouver francophone secondary school, école Gabrielle Roy in Surrey and André Piolat in North Vancouver.

Since 2001, the Province has spent over $1 billion to complete 26 new schools, 32 replacements, 140 additions and 22 renovation projects across British Columbia. By the end of 2008-09, the Province will have invested more than $2.8 billion in school capital and maintenance projects across British Columbia.

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